

Neonic PID Desk Statement

Today, in the interest of better protecting families and pollinators, the EPA is proposing to cancel residential turf applications of imidacloprid, a neonicotinoid insecticide. This action is one of many the agency is proposing in its preliminary interim regulatory decisions for imidacloprid, clothianidin, thiamethoxam, dinotefuran and acetamiprid.

The preliminary neonicotinoid decisions reflect EPA's cutting-edge risk assessments and extensive benefits and risk mitigation analysis, representing more than a decade of work. The EPA is confident that implementing targeted application rate changes, restrictions on specific applications, best practices on farms and other mitigation measures will substantially decrease potential risks, which are balanced by the benefits of this important class of pesticides.

The agency invites comments on the decisions in the following linked dockets through DATE:

[HYPERLINK "https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2008-0844"]
[HYPERLINK "https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0865"]
[HYPERLINK "https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0581"]
[HYPERLINK "https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0920"]
[HYPERLINK "https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0329"]

Additional Background

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

Our ecological risk assessments show that for all the N-S neonicotinoids, spray applications pose potential risks to bees.

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

The EPA has applied this same approach to identify and address potential risks to other non-target species, including birds and aquatic species across all ~~Deliberative Process / Ex. 5~~ cases. Through well-informed, targeted approaches to mitigation, ~~EPA~~ the agency is confident the risks that remain from ~~Deliberative Process / Ex. 5~~ uses of the neonics are appropriately balanced by the benefits, as defined in federal law.

One key benefit of the neonicotinoid pesticides is that they are often the most effective protection against particularly difficult pests.

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

The EPA believes these and other benefits, which are discussed in detail in the benefits assessments in the linked dockets, effectively balance out the real-world risks.

Neonic PID Internal Qs & As

Q1) Why isn't EPA banning the neonics like they have in the EU, Canada and other countries?

One reason why EPA's pesticide regulatory decisions sometimes do not track with those of other foreign countries is that federal pesticide law in the United States is rather unique. The Federal Insecticide, Rodenticide, and Fungicide Act (FIFRA) requires the agency to consider the risks and the benefits of registered pesticide use, but many other countries only look at risks. The EU, for example, has codified a [HYPERLINK "https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A132042"], under which manufacturers must "prove the absence of danger."

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

is naturally leads to different regulatory conclusions than a paradigm that requires risks to be balanced against benefits.

Another reason EPA's decision differ from other countries is that our crops, climate and other factors differ, which results in both different pest pressures and associated risks. Canada, for example, has no commercial citrus groves and produces <2% of the quantity amount of grapes as the US does.

Q2) Canada is banning the neonics due to risks to aquatic invertebrates. Why isn't EPA doing the same?

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

Formatted: Font: Italic

Q3) What about risks to birds from seeds that have been coated with neonicotinoids to protect the plant as it sprouts and grows?

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

Q4) What about risks from pet flea and tick products?

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

Q5) What about the human health risks?

In addition to the risks to both children and adults from residential turf spray applications of imidacloprid described in the Desk Statement, EPA also identified exceedances for several occupational use scenarios.

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

Q6) What about bee kills caused by dust off from seed treatments?

For the neonicotinoid active ingredients with seed treatment uses, the potential for off-site drift of contaminated dust at the time of planting was noted in the risk assessments. This concern is supported by multiple bee kill incidents that were associated with the planting of treated seed, particularly with corn, canola and soybean.

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

The EPA is focusing on mitigating risks from this exposure pathway through wider education and encouraging Best Management Practices. The Agency is working with the regulated community in the development of new technologies to reduce potential dust-off during planting. [HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/pollinator-protection/2013-summit-reducing-exposure-dust-treated-seed"] provides more information on this issue.

The docket at the time of release of the preliminary interim decision will also include stewardship pieces from the EPA and the technical registrants discussing potential ways for increasing education on Best Management Practices that reduce potential exposure to bees from dust-off.

Q7) Is EPA's proposed mitigation protective of bees/pollinators?

EPA's risk management approach for the neonics is to preserve a key tool for growers while maximizing targeted risk reduction, particularly to honey bees that provide a benefit to agriculture through pollination services. Bumble bees, leafcutter bees and blue orchard bees also play unique and important roles in commercial pollination services. Protecting honey bees protects agriculture, in that many crops requires commercial pollination. Risk mitigation that reduces impacts to commercial pollinators also mitigates risks to wild, native species of bees. Rate reductions for certain crops where pollinator/bee exposure is expected to be the highest help in reducing potential risks to all pollinators.

Overall, EPA is proposing addressing risk to pollinators through the following general methods:

1. Targeting uses with potentially higher risks and lower benefits through reducing certain rates or restricting critical pre-bloom ^{Deliberative Process / Ex. 5} period.
2. Preserving the current restrictions for application at-bloom to reduce the (acute risk) immediate impacts of exposure.
3. Discouraging use by homeowners to reduce overall exposure, ensure responsible use and prevent overuse/misuse.
4. Reducing exposure off-site through drift and runoff mitigation.

5. Promoting voluntary stewardship efforts to encourage best practices, education and outreach to applicators and beekeepers

Neonic PID Tweets

Regulatory transparency helps reduce risks to families and bees: new data submitted during an open comment period supports EPA's proposal to cancel residential turf applications of imidacloprid, a popular neonicotinoid insecticide.

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5